Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any cancelled claims at a later date.

1.-10. (canceled)

11. (new) A method for substitute switching of spatially separated switching systems, comprising:

providing a pair of switching systems having one-to-one redundancy, comprising a first switching system in an active operating state in terms of switching, and a second switching system in a hot-standby operating state in terms of switching, the second switching system geographically separated from the first switching system;

establishing communication between a monitoring system and at least one of the paired switching systems; and

changing over in terms of switching from the active switching system to the hot-standby switching system in the event of a loss of communication to the switching system in the active operating state,

wherein the change over occurs in real time.

12. (new) The method as claimed in claim 11,

wherein each switching system comprising a central controller,

the method further comprising exchanging test messages between the monitoring system and the central controllers of the paired switching systems.

13. (new) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the messages are exchanged periodically.

14. (new) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the exchange of the test messages between the monitoring system and the switching system in the active operating state is controlled via the switching system by sending a test request to the monitoring system and receiving a positive acknowledgement.

15. (new) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the exchange of the test message between the monitoring system and the switching system in the hot-standby operating state is controlled via the switching system by sending a test request to the monitoring system and receiving a negative acknowledgement.

16. (new) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the exchange of the test messages between the monitoring system and the switching system in the hot-standby operating state is controlled via the switching system by sending a test request to the monitoring system and receiving no acknowledgement.

17. (new) The method as claimed in 12, further comprising:

reporting to the network management system by the monitoring system the loss of communication with the switching system in the active operating state; and

sending changeover instructions to the monitoring system.

18. (new) The method as claimed in 12,

wherein the change over is controlled by the monitoring system by sending a positive acknowledgement to a test request sent by the switching system in hot-standby operating state, and

wherein the switching system in the hot-standby operating state is changed to the active operating state by the central controller after receiving the positive acknowledgement.

19. (new) The method as claimed in 18, wherein the switching system with the communication loss is changed to the hot-standby operating state and is not automatically switched back to the active operating state following a resolution of the communication loss.

20. (new) The method as claimed in 11, further comprising:

reporting to the network management system by the monitoring system the loss of communication with the switching system in the active operating state; and

sending changeover instructions to the monitoring system.

21. (new) The method as claimed in 11,

wherein the change over is controlled by the monitoring system by sending a positive acknowledgement to a test request, and

wherein the switching system in the hot-standby operating state is changed to the active operating state after receiving the positive acknowledgement.

22. (new) The method as claimed in 21, wherein the switching system with the communication loss is changed to the hot-standby operating state and is not automatically switched back to the active operating state following a resolution of the communication loss.

23. (new) A monitoring system for monitoring a failure of an active switching system, comprising:

a first monitor comprising:

a first communication link to the active switching system, the active switching system in an active operating state in terms of switching,

a second communication link to a second switching system that is geographically separated from the first switching system, the second switching system in a hot-standby operating state in terms of switching;

a second monitor that is geographically separated from the first monitor, the second monitor comprising:

a first communication link to the active switching system, the active switching system in an active operating state in terms of switching,

a second communication link to a second switching system that is geographically separated from the first switching system, the second switching system in a hot-standby operating state in terms of switching; and

a communication link between the first and second monitors,

wherein a failure on the first communication link triggers the second switching system to change over to the active operating state, and

wherein the change over is in real time.

24. (new) The monitoring system as claimed in claim 23, wherein the a communication loss between the first monitor and the active switching system causes a

synchronization between the monitoring systems in order to trigger the second switching system to change over to the active operating state.

25. (new) The monitoring system as claimed in claim 24, wherein the active switching system determined by both the first and second monitors is maintained active if a communication fault between the first and second monitors occurs.